



The EQUAL Times

THE NEWSLETTER OF EQUALITY COLORADO
PO Box 300476, Denver, CO 80203
(303) 839-5540

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In the Name of Mother and Father

Disguised as "parents' rights," a dangerous ballot initiative is being pushed onto Colorado voters this November.

by Jonathan Kelley and Sue Anderson

Reprinted from *Outfront Colorado*

The radical right has a new bag. In their never-ending quest to restrict the rights and freedoms of others, they've come up with another innocent little phrase which packs a whallop: Parental Rights. Open any number of publications by groups like Focus on the Family and you'll see their rallying cry: "The rights of parents are being trampled in this society! We need a way to protect ourselves!"

Their battle plan is multi-pronged: in Colorado they are attempting to amend the Children's Code to include a section on Parental Rights, and most ominous of all, they have submitted ballot language to put the Parental Rights Act to the voters this November. Colorado is just one of at least 29 states in which some version of the PRA has been introduced, but we're the first in which they're trying it as a ballot initiative.

The proposed ballot initiative would add to the Colorado Constitution that "the right of parents to direct and control the upbringing, education, values, and discipline of their children" is a *fundamental right*. This seems harmless enough, even self-evident. But the truth is that the PRA is an integral part of the radical right's "anti" agenda: anti-gay, anti-choice, anti-public education, and much more. Equality Colorado has joined in a broad-based coalition of groups opposing PRA, including the Colorado Education Association, Planned Parenthood, the ACLU, and Citizen's Project. All of these organizations and many more are fighting against what they see as a deceptive, dangerous, and potentially deadly measure.

DECEPTIVE

The groups pushing PRA, including the national group *Of the People* and the local *Coalition for Parental Responsibility*, are well-aligned with the radical right across the country. One of their common tactics is to

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Anti-marriage bill hits Colorado

Colorado has just joined the growing list of states fighting against anti-same sex marriage bills.

Representative Marilyn Musgrave (R-Ft. Morgan) introduced a bill on January 31 which would prohibit gay and lesbian couples from being recognized as married in Colorado. Since it is already impossible for same-gender couples to marry in this state, the bill would have the effect of denying any same-gender couples, **even those married in another state**, from having their marriages recognized here.

That's why this bill is so clearly an attack on the rights of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people in this state. It's mean-spirited, of questionable constitutionality, and anti-family. For a group which paints itself as the protector of families, the radical right has once again shown itself to be interested in only one kind of family -- at the expense of all others.

The bill is seen as a response to a 1993 Hawaii Supreme Court decision which found Hawaii marriage statutes to be discriminatory on the basis of gender. The high court sent the case back to trial with the stipulation that the state must prove a compelling basis to continue this discrimination. If the state cannot do this, same-gender couples will be able to marry in Hawaii. The case, *Baehr v. Lewin*, goes to trial this summer.

Once any state in the union allows equal marriage rights for same-gender couples, the Full Faith and Credit clause of the US Constitution comes into effect. This is the clause which, among other things, means that a marriage performed in one state must be recognized as valid throughout the country. This is what Musgrave's bill, and at least ten others in other states, is trying to circumvent.

Insurance benefits, hospital visitation rights, Social

Security, immigration rights for partners, automatic inheritance rights -- all of these rights and more are taken for granted by different-sex couples who marry. And yet they are routinely denied same-sex couples who are in long-term relationships, undertaking all the responsibilities of marriage for each other.

Equality Colorado is asking for two things from everybody to help us in this battle. Please join us, if you can, in the Photo Project and in our Valentine's Day Rally for our Rights.

PHOTO PROJECT

The Photo Project is a way you can show lawmakers who gays, lesbians, and bisexuals really are. We are asking people from around the state to send photos of their families, along with a brief (fifty to 100 words) statement of who you are. Legislators need to see actual gay and lesbian couples, their children, and their extended families, along with the stories of how they have been affected by being denied equal marriage rights. Equality Lobby is sponsoring the project. We need as many pictures as we can get, as soon as we can get them. (Photos will not be returned, so keep your negatives!)

RALLY FOR OUR RIGHTS

Join Equality Colorado on the front steps of Denver's City and County Building on Valentine's Day (Wednesday, Feb. 14) in a rally to show the state that we cherish our rights, and that all we want is equality. The rally will begin at 4:30 pm. Everyone is invited to bring their families, friends, neighbors, and pen pals. Musgrave's bill is an attempt to create a second class of citizens, one which will never have the choice to marry the person they love, nor to have that relationship protected by the law. Let them know that NOBODY, not us, not our families, is second-class.



Upcoming Events

Rally for Our Rights

February 14, 1996, 4:30 pm

City and County Building steps, Denver

Join us at 4:30 pm on Valentine's Day when we will be holding a rally to protest Rep.

Musgrave's anti-same sex marriage bill. Bring your family, bring your friends -- let everyone know that we cherish our rights!

...

"GOIN' TO THE CANDIDATE DEBATE"

Equality Lobby is proud to co-sponsor three debates:

U.S. Senate Debate

Thursday, February 22, 7-9 pm

MCC of the Rockies, 980 Clarkson, Denver

Hosted by MCC of the Rockies; Sponsored by Stonewall Democrats, Equality Lobby, Out Front, Quest, Lambda Report, Colorado Association of Lesbian and Gay Lawyers.

U.S. Senate Debate

Thursday, February 29, 7-9 pm

CU Boulder

Sponsored by Stonewall Democrats, Equality Lobby, College Democrats

1st Congressional District Debate

Thursday, March 7, 7-9 pm

MCC of the Rockies, 980 Clarkson, Denver

Hosted by MCC of the Rockies; Sponsored by Stonewall Dems, Equality Lobby, Out Front, Quest, Lambda Report, Colorado Association of Lesbian and Gay Lawyers.

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Biblical Self-Defense for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People Workshop

Saturday, March 9th, 9am - 1pm

Iliff School of Theology, 2201 S. University

We will examine the six scriptural references to same sex behavior in light of their historic context and the issues they were addressing. The bible does not condemn same sex orientation nor same sex relationships! We will also explore the presence of same sex relationships and the liberating aspects found in the bible. Please call Laurene Lafontaine at Equality 839-5540 to register and for more information.

...

Eat, Meet the Pols

Thursday, March 21, 5-7 pm

J Beatty's on Colfax (across from the Capitol)

Please join us and your favorite politicians at a fundraiser to benefit Equality Lobby. For reservations, call 839-5540.

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THANK YOU!

There are many volunteers who are a part of Equality and do important work. We wish we could spend much more time thanking them for all that they do. Some of the ones who have helped out in the office are Jeff, Sam, Robben, Peter, William, Barb and Mary. We also want to give a big thanks to those who helped us move, including Kathy, Sunny, Luke & Dan with A-Plus Moving, Stephen, Ann, & Bettina. Still others serve on committees. The individuals on our Board of Directors do a great deal for this organization, giving it a vision, raising money and helping in so many ways. They deserve much more than our brief thanks.

Equality Colorado depends on volunteers for surviving and thriving. We can never have too many! If you're interested in helping out, we'll find a way to put your energy and talents to work. Give us a call at 303-839-5540.

The Equal Times is the quarterly newsletter of Equality Colorado. Equality Colorado is a non-profit statewide, grassroots lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered equal rights advocacy organization. Equality Colorado's mission is to work to secure equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. We seek to create an environment where people are respected, open dialogue is encouraged and the truth is spoken about the diversity of our family and sexual identities. We work for social change and an understanding of the interrelationship between communities.

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From the Director

by Sue Anderson

1995 saw a lot of activity for Equality Colorado and our sister organization, Equality Lobby. We had a busy year in all areas and were able to grow and expand our programs. Financially we achieved a sense of stability with a total income of approximately \$163,000 and expenses of approximately \$147,000. This would not have been possible without the help of individuals and businesses who have supported us with money, volunteer hours and with in-kind contributions. Thanks to everyone who helped us make it through an exciting, busy and productive year.

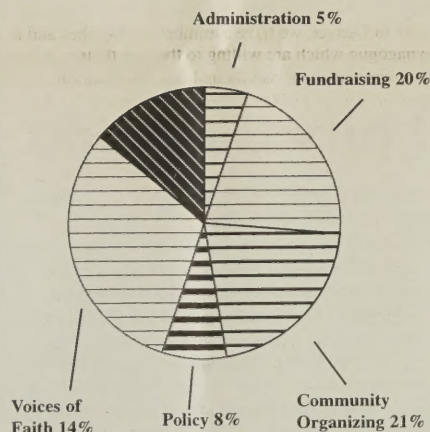
Program Highlights of 1995

- Equality Lobby organized a coalition of disability rights, senior advocacy and LGBT groups to endorse the Hate Crimes Bill sponsored by Rep. Ken Chlouber (R - Leadville) in the Colorado Legislature
- Sent speakers to over 65 classes, conferences, rallies and events throughout the state
- Convened three statewide meetings of activists to plan strategies for tackling Amendment 2
- Developed a new publication, *The Activist News*, and organized the Activist Alert Network, which has over 300 activists subscribing to it

- Co-sponsored six community forums on such topics as domestic partnership, same sex marriage, racism and legislative issues
- Worked with activists in several communities to organize vigils in response to Colorado for Family Values' "Time to Stand" seminars
- Developed a coalition of groups under the umbrella of the Colorado Marriage Rights Project, all of which are working for equal marriage rights
- Forged an affiliate relationships with the Common Decency Coalition in Grand Junction
- Organized with AIDS service providers to form the Ryan White CARE Act Coalition to educate people and elected officials about the importance of passing the Ryan White CARE Act.
- Sponsored the first annual *Claiming the Spirit: Uniting Faith, Rights and Sexuality* conference
- Rev. Laurene Lafontaine presented a 5 week series on HIV/AIDS at Macedonia Baptist Church, co-led a seminar on *Moving the Church Beyond Homophobia* at Iliff Theological Seminary, preached at ten area churches and co-organized a workshop on pastoral care and Amendment 2.

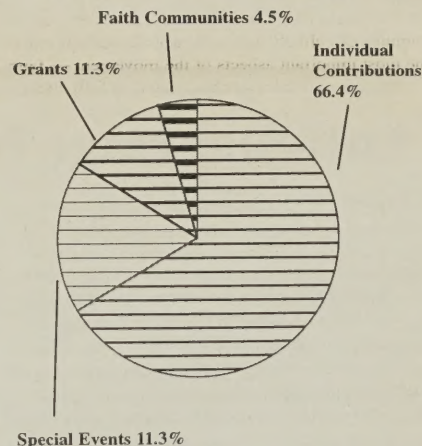
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1995 EXPENSES

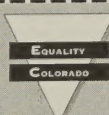


TOTAL: \$147,000

1995 INCOME



TOTAL: \$163,000



Yes! I want to support Equality Colorado's and Equality Lobby's work to secure equality for all....no exceptions



Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

☐ I am interested in Equality's monthly Club giving program. Please send me information.

☐ I would like to make a donation of:

\$10 \$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 other \$ _____

Checks should be made payable either to *Equality Colorado*, a 501(c)(3) non profit organization to which contributions are tax-deductible or to *Equality Lobby*, a 501(c)(4) organization to which contributions are not tax-deductible.

Return this form to:
 Equality Colorado or Equality Lobby, PO Box 300476, Denver, CO 80203 (303) 839-5540

Voices of Faith

By The Rev.
Laurene M.
Lafontaine

"Failure is Impossible"

I recently had the opportunity to be in Rochester, New York, for a weekend. Rochester has an incredible history with various human rights movements such as Harriet Tubman and the underground railroad, Frederick Douglass and the abolitionist movement, and Susan B. Anthony and women's suffrage.

I had the privilege of visiting The Susan B. Anthony House and was moved by the dedication and persistence of those seeking full equality for women. As I listened to the tour guide talk about Susan B. Anthony's life and work, I couldn't help but see parallels with the lesbian, bisexual and gay liberation movement. The work for full equality of all people is challenging, pains-taking, often overwhelming and yet incredibly rewarding because, in the words of Susan B. Anthony, "Failure is impossible!" We know that she understood the price of living out this vision for she didn't live to see the 19th Amendment ratified in 1920. (She died in 1906.)

The experience of being in her home, seeing the photos and hearing about her work for the women's suffrage movement helped me put our movement into a historic context. Change always takes time and yet it is already happening in many ways, particularly within faith communities. More and more people are coming out to their congregations, more clergy are coming out publicly and — in what is perhaps one of the most important aspects of the movement — faith communities are taking public stands to fully include gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people.

The Downtown United Presbyterian Church in Rochester, New York, is a church that has ordained openly gay, lesbian and bisexual people since 1979. It is the church that has called The Rev. Janie Spahr to be a co-pastor. This call was ruled illegal by the highest court within the Presbyterian Church. Yet in the face of such opposition, the church is honoring its call to Janie by sending her out as a lesbian evangelist to talk about the important issues of full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons within faith communities. Janie has been doing this work since March 1993. It was quite a powerful experience to do a Saturday night presentation, talking about the LGBT Presby movement and LGBT political issues to an audience of over 90 people including many gay, lesbian and bisexual people. Downtown is a church that is living out the vision of full inclusion.

Within the Episcopal Church, Bishop John Shelby Spong continues to affirm the gifts and talents of LGBT persons through ordinations and holy unions. Bishop Spong, along with a number of bishops, continue to support honesty and integrity within the Christian Church by encouraging LGBT people to speak the truth about their lives.

One sign of this ongoing struggle is that Retired Bishop Walter C. Righter is facing a heresy trial for signing a document supporting the ordination of non celibate homosexuals and has been charged with violating his ordination vows for ordaining Barry Stopfel, an openly gay man, to the office of deacon. There has been only one heresy trial in Episcopal Church history since the church's founding in America in 1789. The Rev. Stopfel is now a priest and serves as rector of St. George's Episcopal Church in Maplewood, New Jersey. According to Rev. Stopfel, the membership at his church has grown 30 percent since he was installed. Bishop Righter's trial will be Feb. 27-29 in Wilmington, Delaware. His commitment to Christ's call for

everyone to be at the table is a powerful witness.

The struggle of being committed to inclusivity and full participation within the life of the congregation has been painfully manifested in the experience of a growing number of churches. In October 1995, the University Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, was expelled from the Austin Baptist Association for ordaining a gay man as a deacon in 1994. Rev. Larry Bethune, pastor of University Baptist Church said, "Our church had no agenda concerning the issues of homosexuality or ordination. We did not ordain an orientation. We ordained a person."

The church knew that the man was in a long term committed relationship but his orientation was never raised as an issue. A few members left the church when the association began to raise the issue and University Church did not revoke the ordination. Bethune said that the congregation holds diverse opinions on a number of issues and "diversity is reflected in the life and leadership" of the church. University Baptist Church is also aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention, which could change. The Southern Baptist Convention amended its constitution to deny membership to churches that approve of homosexual behavior (they withdrew fellowships in 1992 from two North Carolina churches). Two Evangelical Lutheran Churches in San Francisco have been expelled from their denomination for having openly gay and lesbian pastors.

Here in Denver, we have a number of churches and a synagogue which are willing to live out their commitment to inclusivity and full participation through having out GLB clergy on their staff and ordaining openly GLB persons to church leadership within their congregation. Chris Moore is one of the pastors at Grant Avenue United Methodist Church. Chris is an openly gay man who is seeking ordination within the United Church of Christ. Temple Emanuel was ready to hire a lesbian rabbi but she had already taken another rabbi position in New York. I serve as parish associate at Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church where they continue to work to change the denominational policy prohibiting the ordination of out gays, lesbians and bisexuals.

There are a number of churches that ordain openly gay, lesbian and bisexual members to church leadership positions. Of course, there are clergy serving churches in the Denver Metro area who are gay, lesbian and bisexual but not out; the current atmosphere of fear and institutional homophobia makes it a less than welcoming environment in which to come out. Yet the reality is that the movement for GLB liberation is happening, particularly within faith communities. People of faith are seeing the hypocrisy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" or "Do Ask, Yet Lie" within a faith tradition that calls each of us to be fully who God has created us to be and to be honest about it. Indeed, the sands are shifting within faith communities.

And yet, we know that it will take time. It will take those of us who are gay, lesbian or bisexual to tell our story, share our faith perspective and take our place within every community of faith. It will take

communities of faith saying no to discriminatory and unjust denominational policies and saying yes to truth and justice, saying yes to their commitment to live out faith perspectives of full inclusion and biblical truths. It will take each of our **voices** and our **vision** for full equality and justice. For indeed, **"Failure is impossible!"**

Announcements

We are thrilled to announce that The Rev. Dr. James Forbes, Senior Pastor at Riverside Church in New York City who is one of the premier preachers in the country and leaders in the human rights movement will be one of the keynoter speakers this year at this year's Voices of Faith conference. The video "All God's Children" will have its Denver premiere at the conference. The **Claiming the Spirit: Uniting Faith, Rights and Sexuality Conference** will be held on July 18-20, 1996 at Macedonia Baptist Church. Watch for upcoming information. For early registration, fill out the form below and send it in.

VOF will be sponsoring a monthly interfaith worship service on the third Wednesday of every month. This month, the third Wednesday is Ash Wednesday so we encourage you to attend those services at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, MCC of the Rockies, Grant Ave. United Methodist Church or other supportive churches. The next **Voices of Faith Interfaith Worship Service** will be March 17th at MCC of the Rockies, 980 Clarkson St. at 7 pm. All are welcomed.

Biblical Self-Defense for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People Workshop will be held on March 9th at Iliff School of Theology, 2201 S. University Blvd. from 9am-1pm. We will examine the six scriptural references to same sex behavior in light of their historic context and the issues they were addressing. The bible does not condemn same sex orientation nor same sex relationships! We will also explore the presence of same sex relationships and the liberating aspects found in the bible. Please call Laurene Lafontaine at Equality 839-5540 to register and for more information. Workshop followed by PFLAG's Colorado School Project training addressing school-specific issues from 1-5. All invited.

Claiming the Spirit

The Second Annual Voices of Faith Conference Uniting Faith, Rights, and Sexuality
July 18-20, 1996 • Macedonia Baptist Church, Denver

Featuring: Reverend Doctor James Forbes, Riverside Church, New York City

REGISTRATION

Please register me for ____ places at the 1996 "Claiming the Spirit" conference.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

ZIP _____

____ **VERY** early registration (before Mar. 1) **\$50**

____ Early registration (Mar. 1 - May 31) **\$60**

____ Registration (June 1 - July 1) **\$75**

____ At the door **\$125**

Please enclose your check to Equality Colorado along with this form to:
P.O. Box 300476, Denver, CO 80203

LESBIANS IN EL SALVADOR

Death Squads are just one of many problems they face. And yet progress is being made.

SINCE 1990 I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO live and travel in Central America several times and to work with the women who birthed and are nurturing the feminist and lesbian movements in several countries. As a white, North American lesbian-feminist educator and activist, I had to learn about the experiences and histories of the movements there from a Central American perspective. Too often we in the U.S. assume that we are the model for organizing in other countries. We have much to learn from Central American women and their successes and failures in establishing political movements of their own, growing out of their own realities and needs.

For starters, most Central Americans are quite astute about U.S. politics, having been the recipients of U.S. foreign policies for decades (if not centuries). While many Central Americans are quite knowledgeable about feminist, lesbian and gay movements here, they generally reject the idea that they are patterning themselves after U.S. or European movements. In fact, one of the accusations from the right and the male-dominated left in Central America is that feminism and lesbianism are just imports from *bourgeois* and *imperialistic* countries. Activists are constantly having to explain that feminism and lesbianism do have roots in the lives of Central American women.

There are many lessons we can learn from lesbians, gays, feminists and progressives in Central America. We have a common struggle against the right-wing agenda and the religious conservatives. I have seen the offices and TV listings of The 700 Club in San Salvador. These are folks who are more than happy to see us isolate issues — homophobia, racism, economic issues, disability, etc. — and divide ourselves. Something we in Colorado have learned from Amendment 2 is that we cannot survive that way; Central American feminists and lesbian-feminists have a lot they can teach us about that.

LESBIAN ORGANIZING IN EL SALVADOR

The movement there has a short but very intense history, growing out of the still-blossoming Salvadoran feminist movement that started around 1990. The political history of El Salvador in the 1970s and 1980s included violent government repression and a bloody civil war, which made organizing by women both difficult and dangerous. People who opposed or were suspected of opposing the right wing government (which at one point received \$80 million a day in U.S. tax dollars) were routinely kidnapped, tortured and murdered by the Salvadoran military and the government-sponsored death squads. These people were often described as having simply "disappeared."

In 1990, with the end of the war in sight, women from the leftist political parties and popular organizations that opposed the government began to organize around their own issues. They met with feminists from other parts of Latin America and began organizing in El Salvador.

In 1992, shortly after the Peace Accords were signed ending the 12 year civil war, I went to El Salvador with a women's delegation. In addition to meeting feminists from all over the country, I met and interviewed a woman who had recently organized the first lesbian group in the country. She chose to remain anonymous because she and other lesbians in El Salvador knew that being out would endanger their lives.

The women in the lesbian collective she organized had long histories as political activists. Many had been combatants in the guerrilla army of the leftist FMLN, now a political party that opposed the right-wing government. Many of these women had gone through several serious transitions in their political and personal lives and had come to feminism with a great deal of experience in the popular mass movements of the country, which had been mostly leftist, male-dominated groups.

The lesbian collective started after Salvadoran feminists returned from the First Central American Feminist Encuentro (conference) in Nicaragua in March 1992. There was a strong lesbian presence at the Encuentro from the already existing lesbian movements in Nicaragua and Costa Rica; that exposure was the impetus for lesbians to begin organizing in El Salvador. The few Salvadoran lesbians who knew each other decided to organize as a way to overcome the isolation and lack of respect for their rights in their own country.

One of the overriding factors in the early days of organizing was fear. The right-wing death squads still existed in El Salvador and had been known to have murdered gay men on the streets. One bar had been raided and the customers jailed. In addition, there were the same fears that lesbians around the world feel about family, religion, jobs and children. However, many of the feminist groups were generally supportive. They, too, were fearful of the possible violence and the possibility of a backlash against them. They warned lesbians to go slowly in their organizing but they did not reject lesbians. As one lesbian was cautioned by a friend, "If they didn't kill you in the war, they'll kill you now."

They were also afraid of rejection from the blatantly homophobic leftist political parties, with which almost all the organized lesbians were associated. The leftist belief was that issues such as feminism

and lesbianism would divert members from the work around class issues and would divide the popular movement.

The violent rape of a woman by a union leader in 1992 showcased the contradictions that existed. The union leader was arrested and jailed for the rape but opinion among men and women on the left was divided. Some opposed his punishment, believing that he was a victim of government repression. Many women's groups supported the woman. Those who defended the union leader supported their arguments with their suspicion that the woman he raped was a lesbian and therefore not a trustworthy person.

The lesbian collective also met periodically and secretly in 1992 and 1993. They talked and worked on concerns like coming out and homophobia, providing a safe social setting for women, whether they identified themselves as lesbians or women who were questioning their sexuality. Their meetings had to be clandestine; few people outside the group knew they existed.

The group's semi-public "coming-out" event was in June 1993 at a feminist forum where a group of people presented information on lesbian/gay/bisexual issues, prompting two members to come out publicly. This may have been the first-ever public coming out by anyone in El Salvador.

In July 1993 the three day Second National Assembly of Women in El Salvador took place. The lesbian collective helped organize the event and was listed on the brochure. A few of the women's groups (that were not specifically feminist) objected and said that their members were not yet ready to deal with such issues, yet most groups challenged *all* to begin discussing lesbianism among their members.

At the Assembly the collective conducted two workshops on lesbianism and lesbian mothers. For most women, it was the first time they had ever heard a public discussion of this previously taboo subject. Women talked about the myths and stereotypes they had heard all their lives. It was a beginning.

TROUBLE FOR THE ENCUESTRO

In September 1993, the Salvadoran right wing in the U.S. got hold of a flyer put out by CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the Peoples of El Salvador), a U.S. solidarity group which has supported the FMLN. The flyer announced that CISPES was sponsoring a queer delegation to El Salvador that would attend part of the Encuentro.

One newspaper called on loyal Salvadorans to defend the morality of their country against these "dangerous gringo aberrations" and to maintain a country "where men are men and women are women."

The right wing jumped at the chance to discredit the FMLN, the former leftist guerrillas who were now a political party for the 1994 elections. The right claimed that the FMLN was actually the organizer of the Encuentro (not true) and that the Feminist Encuentro was actually a front for a meeting exclusively for gays and lesbians. They accused the FMLN of sponsoring the conference in order to get more financial support from the U.S. Salvadoran feminists had actually gone to great lengths to be politically autonomous from the FMLN and had organized entirely on their own.

LESBIANS IN EL SALVADOR

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The right-wing daily newspapers launched a vicious gay and lesbian-baiting campaign against the Encuentro and the FMLN. One paper called on loyal Salvadorans to defend the morality of their country against these "dangerous gringo aberrations" and to maintain a country "where men are men and women are women." Some editorials suggested that anyone attending the Encuentro should be required to be tested for AIDS before being allowed in the country.

Even more deadly statements were made: death threats were made against the conference organizing committee, listing the women by name. The organizing committee spoke out immediately, emphatically stating that the conference would go on as scheduled and that all women were welcome to attend. Human rights organizations and the UN mission in El Salvador, there to monitor the implementation of the Peace Accords, also spoke up. Eventually Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani was pressured into stating that, under the Peace Accords, the group had the democratic right to assemble peacefully and that he would help ensure that right.

This campaign caused fear and a certain amount of organizational chaos for the organizing committee in an already stressful situation. Even though one of the major hotels that had been contracted to house participants backed out, the conference went on.

As the 1,100 feminists from around the Caribbean, Latin America and other parts of the world began arriving on October 28 and 29, almost all of them passed through the airport without incident. However, a few women reported that customs confiscated lesbian or other "inappropriate" materials. About the time I arrived, late in the afternoon of the 29th, immigration started collecting passports from arriving women, supposedly to process them. Instead, they kept them and told us that immigration had received a "counter-order" not to admit us to the country. About 100 of us were held at the airport for six hours.

Conference organizers called the UN and human rights offices and arriving women called their embassies. After several hours of songs, chants, and a sit-in of sorts, the UN representatives who had been called to negotiate announced that everyone would be allowed to enter the country. UN peacekeepers accompanied our busses into the city and were stationed at the conference site, but there were no further incidents.

Whatever our government does (and has already done) with our tax dollars — in our names — affects the lives of everyone in Central America, including gays and lesbians.

The Encuentro was a real boost for the lesbians in El Salvador who were already organized and a real eye-opener for women from all over the region who had not known much about lesbianism before. The lesbian collective, by this time known publicly as *Media Luna* (Half Moon), distributed a collection of articles by members of the group who wrote anonymously about their experiences as lesbians. Women also planned the next Latin American Lesbian Encuentro for 1995.

As if 1993 had not been full enough already in El Salvador, the country was also preparing for what it hoped would be democratic elections in early 1994. Several feminist groups began doing voter registration and civic education. A feminist coalition also developed a "women's platform"

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

by Alicia Calderón

HATE CRIMES

- A blind woman is waiting at a bus stop and her seeing-eye dog is attacked by two young men.
- A gay man is assaulted upon leaving the bar by several men who say "we don't like fags."
- A six year-old watches her lesbian mother get beaten up outside a fast food restaurant by two women who don't like the bumper stickers on her car.

Do these stories sound familiar? Many people have either had personal experience or know someone who has been the victim of a hate crime. These are real scenarios which could happen to any person perceived to be gay or lesbian.

Equality Lobby is attempting to amend the existing "Ethnic Intimidation Law" to include the categories of age, disability and sexual orientation. In addition, the name of the charge would be changed to the more accurate Hate Crime. Finally, harassing behavior will be added to list of crimes. One other little word which makes a big difference when prosecuting will be included: "perceived." This means that even if the person who was attacked was not gay, but the perpetrator thought that he or she was, then they can still be charged with a Hate Crime.

In reality, Hate Crimes are rarely prosecuted because they are difficult to prove. However, passage of such a law does provide the police with additional charges that they can use in these cases, and it sends a message that crimes motivated by hatred and bigotry will not be tolerated.

This is the second year that Equality Lobby has introduced a bill on Hate Crimes. Last year was the first time ever that a bill with the words "sexual orientation" passed out of a House Committee after eloquent testimony by gays, lesbians, families and expert witnesses. This year the bill's sponsor is Senator Dorothy Rupert, and it has been double assigned to the Senate Judiciary and Appropriations Committees. The first two weeks of February will be crucial in determining whether this bill passes out of the Senate or not.

What You Can Do:

1. You can call your Senator and ask that they support

this bill. If you need help figuring out your Senate District, please call the Equality office: 839-5540.

2. Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee: Wham, Mutzebaugh, Coffman, Dennis, Hopper, Perlmutter, L. Powers, Rupert and Thiebaut. Members of the Senate Appropriations: Lacy, Blickensderfer, Bishop, Johnson, Rizzuto, Tanner, Tebedo, Thiebaut and Wham.
3. Sign up for the Activist Network and receive monthly reports on what is happening with alerts on action you can take on various issues.

OTHER LEGISLATIVE ISSUES:

HB 1022: This bill has already been killed in the House Education Committee. It introduced the idea of giving children and parents a choice between health education curriculum teaching abstinence only with "moral and character development" and abstinence only with "consequences."

HB 1001: Thanks to Merlin Logan who testified in support of this bill before the House Judiciary Committee. The bill would remove caps on wrongful death suits. Merlin pointed out that families of Hate Crimes murder victims would benefit from this.

A bill from the Health Department requesting supplemental funding for the Assistance for AIDS-Specific Drugs Program was denied by the Joint Budget Committee. Thanks to Arthur Powers, Karen Ringen, Mountain Legislative Consulting Services, and others, a quick meeting was called to address this bill. Testimony was presented and it is now back in the State budget proposal. Mountain Legislative will be watching this one closely.

Anti-Same Sex Marriage:

HB 1291: Representative Musgrave has introduced a bill which would deny recognition of same-sex marriages in the state of Colorado. This would mean that even if Hawaii were to grant same-sex couples the right to obtain legal marriage certificates, when one of those married couples came to Colorado the marriage would not be recognized.

Fourteen states (and counting) have faced or are facing similar legislation. Please call Equality Lobby or the Colorado Marriage Rights Project for more information: 839-5540.

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which they took to the various political parties and asked them to include in their own platforms. The women's platform included demands for social, political and economic justice for women in the country, including the right to exercise one's sexuality — without discrimination or prejudice — and the right to an abortion, the last two being the most controversial. Although the left did not fare as well as it had hoped in 1994, women began a public policy debate about lesbian rights that hopefully will never be closed again.

The time after the elections was a time of internal evaluation and reflection for women. The lesbian collective felt stretched to the limits by the external pressures of the Encuentro and the anti-lesbian campaign that preceded it. Although politically they withstood it well, internally the group had not yet dealt with the individual and group issues surrounding coming out and internalized homophobia. Work in the lesbian collective and in the feminist community slowed down considerably.

By 1995 the situation had changed. Feminist groups were working at the usual Salvadoran breakneck pace, accomplishing phenomenal amounts of work. As a result of the Encuentro and the elections, lesbian rights had become a staple of feminist groups and some other progressive groups.

There is still work left to do, yet in their short organized history, they have made a significant

impact on the feminist and progressive communities and on Salvadoran society as a whole. What can we do to help? A first step is to educate ourselves about the general situation in El Salvador and particularly the U.S. role. Whatever our government does (and has already done) with our tax dollars — in our names — affects the lives of everyone in Central America, including gays and lesbians.

Another step is to think globally and learn about and incorporate issues there into the work we do here. One way we can support lesbians is by networking and sending donations of materials on lesbianism as well as financial donations. One group, Las Dignas, maintains a resource library on women's issues; the most sought after materials they have are about lesbianism. Materials in Spanish are most useful but materials in English are helpful, too.

Materials for the resource library can be sent to Las Dignas. Financial contributions and correspondence can also be sent to the lesbian collective. Correspondence in Spanish will get the quickest response:

*Las Dignas
Av. Gabriela Mistral #224
San Salvador
El Salvador, Centro America*

The author is a lesbian educator who wishes to remain anonymous for safety reasons.

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Out and About: News and Action

EMPLOYMENT NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT

Our own Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell is one of the chief targets for supporting ENDA. That means it's up to his constituents -- all Coloradans -- to let him know how we feel about the bill. ENDA would prohibit job discrimination based on sexual orientation throughout the country.

ACTION

FAX Sen. Campbell at (202) 224-1933 or write him at the United States Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510 with a personalized letter urging him to support fairness and civil rights.

HRC

IN THE ROUGH

CBS golf commentator Ben Wright of "lesbians in the sport hurt women's golf" and women golfers are "handicapped by having boobs" fame was recently relieved of his commentator duties after it was revealed that he had indeed made those comments. Reporter Valerie Helmbreck, who first reported Wright's statements only to have Wright charge that she misquoted him, said "I've always known what the truth is. I'm really glad this is over."

TRANS YOUTH TO BE SENTENCED

There will be a rally in Colorado Springs on Friday, February 16 to demonstrate against the possibility of the judge "throwing the book" at Sean O'Neill. O'Neill, the 20 year-old Colorado Springs person born Sharon Clark, was charged with eleven felony counts (including sexual assault) when it was discovered that four girls who claim they engaged in consensual sex with O'Neill on several occasions didn't realize that O'Neill actually had vaginal sex organs. The attack on O'Neill poses grave consequences for transpeople who are pre-operative or non-operative, and for trans-men who lack the \$60,000 (or the desire) for a complete phallo-plasti.

ACTION

Join Equality Colorado along with nationwide transgender groups in demonstrating outside the Colorado Springs Courthouse on Friday, Feb. 16 at 9:00 am.

SLAIN LESBIANS' HOME ROBBED

"I'm outraged at the whole world. I'm numb. I don't trust anyone anymore. I just want all the bad stuff to stop," said Lorri Ellis, daughter of slain lesbian Oregonian Roxanne Ellis, after Roxanne and Michelle Abdill's house was burglarized a few weeks after their highly publicized double murder in Medford. The confessed murderer has gone on record as saying he doesn't "care for lesbians."

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBIT

Entertainment Weekly's September 8, 1995 report on "The Gay 90's" sold a record 115,000 newsstand copies.

GLAAD

SO-DO-MY FRIENDS

In California, Sen. Rob Hurtt, who is in the pocket of the radical right, has said he will move to reinstate the old sodomy penalties of the state, which included castration and lobotomy. Similar legislative moves are being made in other states

Patricia Nell Warren

AIDS FUNDING STILL IN JEOPARDY

On January 26, Congress passed a new Continuing Resolution, which among other things extends FY 96 funding for Ryan White, HOPWA and the AIDS Education and Training Centers through March 15th. After then, however, there is absolutely no guarantee that funding will continue.

ACTION

Call your legislators and demand once and for all the Congress provide full funding for all AIDS programs through September 30, 1996. Tell them to act swiftly to provide the resources to fight this epidemic and care for people living with AIDS, their families and caregivers throughout the fiscal year.

AIDS Action Council



The clock is ticking ON THE SUPREME COURT AMENDMENT 2 Decision!

PLANS ARE BEING MADE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY FOR RALLIES AND ACTIONS ON DECISION DAY REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME

Find out what is happening in your community and get involved in the planning!

In Colorado, call Equality Colorado at 303-839-5540. In the rest of the country, call the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force at 202-332-6483 x3206.

In Colorado, the following rallies are already planned for 6:00 p.m. on decision day:

DENVER

West Steps of the
State Capitol

COLORADO SPRINGS

Meet at the Pride Center
125 N. Parkside

PUEBLO

County Courthouse

READY TO FIGHT

A panel of three judges from the Second Circuit Court Appeals heard the case of *Able v. Perry* in New York City on January 16th. This case is one of only two cases to be heard challenging "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" at the federal appeals court level. In a related case, the court has yet to issue an opinion on Navy Lieutenant Paul Thomasson's appeal in Richmond, Virginia. Three other "new policy" cases are currently being appealed at the circuit court level as well. For more information contact Kirk Childress or Michelle Beneke of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network at (202) 328-3244.

GLAAD

WE DELIVER, TOO

The United States Postal Service has implemented a new personnel policy regarding discrimination against gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered employees. Post Master General Marvin Runyon issued the following statement: "The Postal Service is committed to ensuring a workplace that is free of discrimination.... We recognize and value our diverse workforce and are committed to the fair treatment of all employees. Harassment and disparate treatment based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or identity will not be permitted or condoned in the Postal Service." The USPS Diversity Office in DC announced the policy on August 31 of this year.

A non-profit organization that works for this and other anti-discrimination statutes is the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy, Inc. (ICTLEP), which is headquartered in Houston. After hearing of the USPS policy, ICTLEP Executive Director Phyllis R. Frye commented, "I believe that the 'or identity' language along with the 'or perceived' language was probably designed to cover the transgender community."

GLB News/GLAAD

'96 WORKPLACE CONFERENCE IN SF

The 5th Annual "Out and Equal in the '90s" National Conference on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Workplace Issues will be held April 20-21, 1996 in San Francisco, CA at the Ramada Hotel. Topics will include: Create/Grow a LGBT Employee Organization; How to Organize a LGBT Labor Caucus; HIV in the Workplace; How to Get Domestic Partnership Benefits in Your Organization; and many more. There will also be a Pre-conference Institute for Human Resource Professionals on Fri., April 19.

ACTION

Register before March 1 and save on registration fees. Make checks and money orders payable to NGLTF Policy Institute, 2320 17th St. NW, Washington, DC 20009-2702. Early bird rates: Limited Income -- \$80; Cooperating Organization -- \$100; Individual -- \$125.

ANOTHER STATE UNDER SIEGE

- An amendment to the Educational Appropriations Bill that will outlaw in a state-funded educational institution any curriculum, activity, or material that portrays homosexuality as a positive alternative.
 - A bill or a second amendment that will make it illegal for any secondary or elementary school library to have publications or materials that portray homosexuality as a positive alternative. Community public and college libraries may have these works, but it will be illegal to check them out to minors.
 - A bill that will make same-gender marriage illegal in the state, and ensure that same-gender marriages performed legally elsewhere will not be recognized in the state.
 - Discussion of making domestic partner benefits illegal in the state.
- None of these bills has been introduced yet, but are promised soon in ...

IOWA!!

ACTION

For more information, or to help out queers in that state, contact the Iowa Coalition for Human Rights, c/o Richard Shannon, 430 E. Bloomington St., Apt. 2-B, Iowa City, IA 52245. Or call (319) 335-1667 or (319) 335-8881.

TWO MAINE BILLS WITHDRAWN

Saying Mainers need a respite from the emotionally charged issue of gay rights, two bills have been withdrawn from the Maine legislature this session. The first, introduced by State Senator Dale McCormick, would have prohibited discrimination in employment and housing, credit, and public accommodations based on sexual orientation. Such a bill has been introduced in the last 10 two-year sessions. The legislature approved such a bill in 1993, but then-Gov. John McKernan vetoed it. Gov. Angus King has said he will sign such a bill if it gets to his desk.

The other bill, by Sen. Georgette Berube, would have allowed some forms of discrimination but forbid others. Her controversial bill would have also prohibited same-sex marriages and created an anti-gay double standard in Maine's sexual abuse laws.

Portland Press Herald

WE MOVED!!

In case you hadn't heard, Equality Colorado finally has new digs, complete with more space, a conference area, and lots of private offices. We're in the same building, one floor up. Come by and see us some time! We couldn't have done it without your support.

Parental Rights Amendment

continued from page 1

spread Social Services horror stories: cases in which innocent parents are crushed by a mean and uncaring Department of Social Services who steal their children away because of false accusations of abuse. All the groups in the anti-PRA coalition agree that parents' rights — everyone's rights — must be protected against unwarranted state interference. But the fact is that laws protecting parents are already on the books. The Virginia-based group sponsoring these amendments across the nation has even published a list of Supreme Court decisions which uphold the rights of parents.

So if they already have the case law on their side, why do they need PRA? Because there are countless laws they want to change and countless ways they want to restrict the rights of all minors. Here are a few ways they want to change the law:

- **"Best interest of the child."** These groups have repeatedly expressed their desire to change the accepted standard for child protection policy from "best interest of the child" to a presumption in favor of parents. They feel that the rights of children must be superceded by

what the parents think is best — even in situations in which there is good reason to suspect child abuse.

- **Parental consent for abortion and other health services.** When asked how the PRA might affect the protected right of an under-18 girl to get an abortion, PRA advocate Ken Gray said he believed the act would mandate parental consent. The reality is that in a functional family, parental notification or consent is probably not even an issue, because either the child would have a strong enough relationship with her parents not to get pregnant or would want to discuss it with them if it happened. Serious problems arise, however, in dysfunctional families where a youth could be in danger if they had to face their parents.

- **Access to educational materials.** In the realm of education, the prospects are truly daunting. PRA's proponents say that the amendment would give parents more strength when challenging curriculum, subject content, methods of instruction, and any established standards. But the truth is, once again, that parents and all voters already have that ability to work to change their schools at the local level. What the radical right wants is the ability to escape any educational standards for home-schooling and to be able to refuse to educate

their children at all. They want the ability to control all school curriculum with threats of legal challenges over everything from books to subject matter to educational tests. PRA could only help their cause.

There is so much a Parental Rights Amendment *could* do that simply isn't mentioned in the language of the amendment. But perhaps the most troublesome aspect of the PRA is that we simply don't know its scope. The vagueness of the language will ensure that there will be litigation over every statute that PRA could potentially affect — from abortion rights to custody, adoption, and foster parenting laws to freedom of public information at libraries.

DANGEROUS AND DEADLY

There is great concern that a PRA would weaken existing child abuse and neglect laws, making it more difficult to prosecute abusive parents. A parental belief in strict discipline cannot be used as an excuse for true physical abuse.

Furthermore, the PRA does not specify age, so an unemancipated 17-year old would have the exact same legal rights as a two-month old baby: none. Children would be seen as nothing more than their parents' property under the law. The potential for increased illegal or unsafe abortions is obvious, as are the chances that sexual abuse will be even more underreported, and vital medical attention will not be sought or given.

Why should we in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities have to worry about PRA? There are several reasons.

1. Right now, minors have the right to confidentiality in counseling, certain health services, and STD screening and testing. This includes LGBT youth who fear, too often with good reason, to tell their parents about their sexual orientation or to take an HIV test if it means their parents will find out.

Fortunately, current law protects the confidentiality of teens seeking certain medical services. Studies such as one published in the *Journal of Pediatrics* show that too often a teen will go without needed medical/mental health services if their privacy is not assured. Moreover, clinics and service providers encourage teens to talk with their family, knowing that this will ultimately be in the best interest of any client.

What of the troubled teen who is told by her parent she will be kicked out, beat up, or killed if she gets pregnant, "becomes a lesbian," or gets HIV? What of the young gay man who thinks he's the only one, is having suicidal thoughts, and is in need of emergency intervention? With the chilling effect of PRA, the chances that these young people will get the help they need decreases drastically.

2. The PRA will, if passed, be used to challenge the presence of any literature dealing with gay and lesbian issues and challenge all education around LGBT issues. Parents who don't want their kids exposed to any LGBT issues will work to make sure that no youth has access to any such information, and thus their attacks on gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth will be bolstered.

3. The rights of LGBT parents are likely to be hurt by a PRA. For the many gays and lesbians who have kids who are not biologically theirs, a Parental Rights Amendment could be used to restrict their adoption and foster care rights.

THE TRUTH IS that parents are already protected. The only people who can be affected by this amendment are youth — youth who could lose all legal ability to challenge parental decisions, youth who deserve a decent and well-rounded education, youth who should have the rights of confidentiality and safety, and, most of all, youth who are put at risk by their own parents.

For more information on PRA, contact Protect Our Children at P.O. Box 18265, Denver, CO 80203 or call 360-8911

Family Matters

by John D'Emilio, Director
The Policy Institute of National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

What is a family? According to opinion polls, a majority of Americans understand family as a group of people who love one another and take care of each other in good times and bad.

What is a family? In the hands of the radical Christian right, it has become a symbol and a weapon. A symbol of an imagined past when everything was just fine. A weapon that divides people into categories of good or bad, moral or immoral, productive citizen or irresponsible parasite. The allegedly "pro-family" rhetoric of the radical right is deeply homophobic and antifeminist, and exploits historically powerful racist stereotypes.

What is a family? For lesbians and gay men, family has become the frontier issue in our struggle for freedom, justice, and respect. Everywhere we look, family issues are surfacing — in the courts, in state legislatures, in workplaces, in the schools, in communities of faith, in the activities of our community centers and other organizations. Sometimes, picking up a copy of a gay newspaper, nothing but family issues of one sort or another seem to fill its pages.

It wasn't always so. When I was first coming out in the late sixties, as a college student influenced by the hippie counterculture and the first wave of radical feminist theory, "family" was something I could do without. It seemed that my only choices were to have a family, which meant my family of origin, or to be gay, which meant exile and escape from the constrictions of a heterosexist institution.

So why does family seem so important to us in the 1990s? Is the concern for family simply a defensive, reactive move on our part, a knee-jerk response to the "traditional family values" rhetoric of the Radical Christian Right? Or does the rise of family issues tell us something about how we have changed and what we want?

I think it's the latter. There are good reasons growing out of the history of our movement and communities that have pushed family issues to the front burner.

One has to do with the growing diversity of the public face of our movement and our community organizations. Lesbians, for instance, have often taken the lead in campaigns involving custody,

adoption, and our right to be parents. Lesbians and gays of color have spoken and written passionately of the importance of strong, extended family ties for the survival of their home communities in the face of racism, and of their unwillingness to have to choose between family ties or their sexual identity. As gays and lesbians in smaller communities come out of the closet and organize for change, family is something just around the corner, not something to escape from.

Family issues challenge homophobia in new and important ways. One of the most destructive and persistent stereotypes used to perpetuate hatred against us and keep us isolated and separate is the claim that we are a danger to children. The gay man who molests children, or the lesbian teacher who corrupts her students, have been common cultural myths. As more and more parents come out of the closet and assert their right to keep their children, as more and more of us choose to have children even after coming out, we force the issue of queers and children in proactive ways.

Parents are becoming front-line activists in institutions that reach into the lives of most Americans. Take the public schools, for instance. As the children of openly gay or lesbian parents make their way through the public schools, these parents have to confront the insidious effects of homophobia in compelling ways. Will the schools, through their curriculum, be teaching these children to hate their parents? Will these children be the targets of ridicule, ostracism, and harassment? What must parents do to protect the integrity of their family relationships and to keep their children from harm? The actions they take—whether at parent-teacher conferences, at PTA meetings, or in one-on-one conversations with the parents of their children's friends, is the stuff of permanent grassroots social change.

Family issues matter. Whether it be the public rituals we create to celebrate our committed relationships or our decisions to have children in our lives, the articulation of a lesbian and gay "family politics" has the power to move our freedom struggle forward.

Dr. D'Emilio is a leading historian on sexuality and the gay and lesbian movement in the United States. He is the author of Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities (1983); Intimate Matters: A history of Sexuality in America (1988), and Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University (1992).

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Notable Quotables

"Procreation is used as an argument [against gay marriage] but interestingly enough, no heterosexual couples are asked that question. If two 75-year-olds walk in for a marriage license, they don't say, 'What the hell are you doing here?'"

Thomas Gill, chairman of Hawaii Gov. Benjamin Cayetano's Commission on Sexual Orientation and the Law, which recently recommended legalization of same-sex marriage. Gill is a former lieutenant governor and Congressman.

"Black and white Christians can get together and bring the kingdom of God in the name of heaven if we can put a stop to the sodomites."

Promise Keepers

"[M]ost self-avowed Christians are unfortunately just like him, using the Bible like a drunk uses a lamp-post -- more for support than illumination."

Charles Lederer, responding to a letter to the editor by Michael "Church Lady" Ives in the Iowa State Daily

"These are not people imposing their values on others, but making sure they can transmit their own values to their children."

Ralph Reed talking about his constituents at Old Dominion University

"Let's agree with opponents today, just for the moment, and say that homosexuality is a choice. Well, one may also consider religion a choice. In the last millennium, Jews were told 'Being Jewish is a choice. Become a Christian and we won't kill you. Go kneel - go kiss the cross.' But they would not. Why? Because the way we choose to love the divine is part of our very essence, part of who we are. Just as who we choose to love is part of our very essence, our humanness."

Sheila Kuehl, California Assemblywoman, in her closing argument on AB 1001, which would have prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation in California's public schools. The bill lost in committee.

"Sexual activists stole the happy name GAY from the majority. We must now deny such a beautiful name to our children. Amendment 2 stops further encroachment on the community."

W. R. Cochran, Littleton, CO

"[The Environmental movement] is the modern home of the socialist/Communist movement in America."

Rush Limbaugh, quoted in FAIR's book "The Way Things Aren't"

"What we need is a national 'Stay in the Closet Day' to remind 'gays,' as they're so-called, their sin of sodomy is condemned by the Bible, the word of God."

letter to the Editor of Henderson, KY

"An engineering professor is treating her husband, a loan officer, to dinner for finally giving in to her pleas to shave off the scraggly beard he grew on vacation. His favorite restaurant is a casual place where they both feel comfortable in slacks and cotton-polyester-blend golf shirts. But, as always, she wears the gold and pearl pendant he gave her the day her divorce decree was final. They're laughing over menus because they know he always ends up diving into a giant plate of ribs but she won't be talked into anything more fattening than shrimp. Quiz: How many biblical prohibitions are they violating? Well, wives are supposed to be 'submissive' to their husbands (I Peter 3:1). And all women are forbidden to teach men (I Timothy 2:12), wear gold or pearls (I Timothy 2:9) or dress in clothing that 'pertains to a man' (Deuteronomy 22:5). Shellfish and pork are definitely out (Leviticus 11:17, 10) as are usury (Deuteronomy 23:19), shaving (Leviticus 19:27) and clothes of more than one fabric (Leviticus 19:19). And since the Bible rarely recognized divorce, they're committing adultery, which carries the rather harsh penalty of death by stoning (Deuteronomy 22:22)."

From lesbian columnist Deb Price's new book, "And Say Hi To Joyce"

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